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ABSTRACT

Presented is a summary evaluation of the first (1973) summer Leadership Training Institute (LTI) to encourage the development of state plans for the education of the gifted and talented. It is said that the 2-week institute provided the 79 participants with guidelines for developing a state plan, the benefit of colleagues' experience in setting up special programs, expertise to increase motivation in program development, and a source of general information about programs for the gifted. The LTI is reported to have been set up as a result of an Office of Education (OE) report to Congress which recommended national LTI's. The first of the three planned LTI's is reported to have been attended by teams from 17 states, one region, and one foreign country. Listed are objectives established for the LTI such as development and dissemination of appropriate publications and guidelines for the selection of participating states. It is explained that state teams consisted of the state education association's director of gifted and talented, a representative of a local education association, and two other interested individuals. Training sessions are said to have varied from large groups to small groups to independent study. It is noted that every participating state team developed a state plan while at the institute. Participants' evaluation of the LTI are reported to have been highly favorable. Among outcomes of the first LTI discussed are regular communication with OE and development of consultant services. It is stressed that a successful institute provides practical information which can be immediately used by participants. (DB)

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EVALUATION OF THE FIRST SUMMER LEADERSHIP TRAINING INSTITUTE 1973: A BRIEF SUMMARY

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Evaluation of the First Summer Leadership Training Institute 1973

A Brief Summary

Evaluation of the First Summer Leadership Training Institute 1973 A Brief Summary

The second National/State Leadership Training Institute on the Gifted and Talented (LTI) will be held this summer. With the experience and recommendations of the first LTI, this Institute offers those attending an occasion to exchange ideas and interact with fellow participants—an opportunity to influence national, state, and local action in the area of education for the gifted and talented.

Last summer's Institute provided participants with:

1. Guidelines for a state plan for the education of the gifted and talented
2. Colleagues' experience in setting up programs for the gifted and talented
3. Expertise to increase motivation of state leadership to provide these programs
4. A source of general information about such programs

The success of the first LTI can be capsulized by pointing to the fact that every participating state team developed a state plan at the Institute. These have been submitted to the LTI Director in final form.

THE BEGINNING

The origin of these Institutes is the U.S. Office of Education Commissioner's Report to Congress *(Education of the Gifted and Talented: Report to the Congress of the United States, 1971)* recommending that national leadership training institutes be held "... to upgrade supervisory personnel and program planning for the gifted at the State level." The LTI has been set up specifically to meet this recommendation through the following objectives:

1. To establish and maintain a working communication network involving the US Office of Education, Regional Offices of Education, State and local educational agencies
2. To formulate and initiate regional team activities involving unique planning and program development for the gifted and talented
3. To train selected individuals both nationally and regionally at regular training institutes or workshops (of sufficient duration)
4. To develop, reproduce, and disseminate some appropriate documents, publications, and media products on the gifted and the talented through LTI-sponsored workshops and institutes
5. To increase public consciousness, awareness, and knowledge about the gifted and talented

To help accomplish these objectives, two-week Leadership Training Institutes have been scheduled to be held during three consecutive summers. Each LTI trains representatives from each of the participating states. Faculty and consultants are hired to conduct these summer institutes.

The National/State Leadership Training Institute on the Gifted and Talented was established to initiate and/or improve programs for gifted students in each state. With this goal in mind, the first National Summer LTI was designed to develop a team for each participating state. This team would be trained to administer programs for gifted and talented students in its state.

The first such Summer LTI was held for two weeks last July in Squaw Valley, California. Seventeen states, one region and one foreign national team attended. A total of 79 participants.

LTI participants were predominantly school administrators and teachers; consultants and coordinators for the gifted formed almost as large a representation. State administrators and parents formed a small percentage of the group. Ninety percent of those present had experience in working with the gifted.

Recognized experts in the field provided guidance and instruction at training sessions throughout the conference.

Program objectives were set for LTI core staff, for LTI participants, and for the project as a whole. The LTI called for an evaluation of the first Summer LTI and of the Institute's effectiveness in stimulating state-level support for programs for the gifted and talented. These were studied, evaluated and later published. Operations Research, Inc., produced the *Evaluation of the National/State Leadership Training Institute on the Gifted and Talented* in October 1973. Operations Research was granted a contract to evaluate the planning and management of the first summer LTI and to evaluate the Institute's effectiveness. This study was to conduct a short survey of participants at the beginning and the end of the Summer LTI as a means of assessing the immediate influence of the experience. The Operations Research staff was on-site for the entire Summer Institute.

Questionnaires were used to collect attitudinal data from all participants. Items covered background in education of the gifted and talented, expectations of the Institute, reactions to the content and environment of the sessions, etc. Assessment was also based on staff interviews, session observations and use of session evaluation cards.

OBJECTIVES

The Director and staff of the National/State Leadership Training Institute for the Gifted and Talented outlined specific program objectives for the first summer LTI. These were as follows:

1. To train selected individuals both nationally and regionally at regular training institutes or workshops

   To train 10-16 state teams (3-5 members per team in July 1973) at one two-week National Summer LTI

   To assist in the planning of at least two Regional LTIs and to participate in them

2. To develop, reproduce, and disseminate some appropriate documents and publications of gifted and talented through LTI-sponsored workshops and institutes

   To cooperate with the National Clearinghouse on Gifted and Talented, to develop at least three fold-out brochures on certain vital aspects of education of gifted and talented persons

   To cooperate with the National Clearinghouse on Gifted and Talented, to develop at least two publications dealing with identification of gifted and talented persons and with current program practice

3. To increase public consciousness, awareness and knowledge about the gifted and talented.

The LTI Director and staff established guidelines for the selection of participating states for the Institute, specifically:

1. One state from each region without a full-time state director of gifted and talented programs plus up to six other states in general may elect to send a team
2. Each team must finance part of their own expenses
3. Each team must be willing to follow up by:

   sharing experiences and materials with neighboring states as well as through Regional LTIs, and
   attending scheduled regional workshops to be held by areas throughout the year.

4. Each interested State Educational Agency must submit one completed application form for its team, including:

   statement of needs and purpose for participation

   names, addresses, phone numbers of team members

   background of individuals in relation to the education of the gifted and talented, and

   a brief description of a gifted child the applicant has known.

The states which were accepted by LTI staff were at various stages in their development of programs for the education of gifted and talented children. Approximately one-third had existing programs; two-thirds of the states had just begun to establish requirements for programs or had not yet reached that stage.

LTI criteria for the composition of state and regional teams were:

STATE TEAM

The State Education Association's Director of Gifted and Talented

A representative of a local education association

Two more members to be chosen from the following groups: college or university; parents of gifted and talented children; private sector; state or local school board

REGIONAL TEAM

Regional OE staff
Individuals to become LTI trainers.

The individual LTI participants included a diversity of backgrounds:

Teacher, Administrator, Educator	36%	participants
Coordinator for Programs of the Gifted	18%	14 participants
Consultant of the Gifted	15%	12 participants
No Experience	13%	10 participants
Member, State Dept. of Education	10%	8 participants
Parent of Gifted Child	8%	6 participants

What were the most important contributions the Institute could make? Four main items appeared most frequently when participants were asked this question. They were:

1. To provide guidelines for a State Plan
2. To share experiences of others in setting up programs for education of the gifted and talented
3. To increase motivation of state leadership to provide programs
4. To provide a source of general information

This information paralleled objectives outlined by the LTI staff, and it was encouraging to see that what the participants wanted to learn was what the LTI had been deisgned to provide.

SERVICES

Facilities provided for participants at the Institute supplied valuable services. A library resource room was set up to provide books, films and pamphlets for use by all LTI participants. A full-time librarian was present to offer any assistance needed. Participants indicated that the library was extensively used and proved to be an asset to the entire Institute. Many new publications and ideas were exposed to those who used the library and helped them in writing their state plans.

Typing assistance was provided by a secretarial service open to all participants. All requests were handled on a first-come, first-served basis. This service was helpful to both staff and participants.

LTI consultants and staff were available at scheduled times to help individuals and/or state teams during the Institute. This service was widely used and appeared to have been the most helpful of all services. Leadership was provided to states and individuals; this was especially useful to those with no previous experience in the education of the gifted.

A general office was also set up to help with arrangements such as transportation to airports and reimbursement procedures.

TRAINING SESSIONS

Training sessions of the Institute were structured into five categories:

1. Large groups
2. Medium-sized croup
3. Small-medium-sized groups
4. Samll groups
5. Independent study

The small-medium and medium groups were more like workshop sessions centered on specific topics, whereas most of the large sessions were general lecture groups. The LTI purposely started out with a few large group sessions to set the tempo and tone of the effort. Gradually sessions were made smaller as participants took on more of the responsibility; lectures became discussions. Small groups and independent study allowed teams or individuals to work independently.

The length of sessions varied. All sessions started at 8:30 a.m. Different sessions were going on at the same time, but sessions were repeated during the day to ensure all a chance to participate. Also, some sessions were given by two or more people. The participants were given the option as to whom they would like to observe. The repeated sessions were never equivalent, since both speaker performance and group participation vary considerably.

EVALUATION

The stated objectives of the participants for the institute were:

1. To formulate a written State Plan or to reassess the existing State Plan in terms of:

   needs assessment
   objectives
   consideration of program options
   some budgetary consideration
   possible legislative models

2. To become familiar with kinds of available resources:

personnel
written materials
media products

3. To design specific strategies for follow-up to the National Summer LTI in terms of:

content
time structure
dissemination (including building public acceptance)

These tasks were to be accomplished through the efforts of the LTI core staff. Their objectives included providing the participants with increased competencies in the following areas:

1. State of the art
2. Characteristics of gifted and talented,
identification procedures, and
resultant differentiated educational needs
3. Current program practices,
program prototypes,
program initiation steps, and
curriculum materials
4. Teacher training (preservice and in-service) and teacher selection
5. Changing process in institutions
6. Building an advocacy base

The training sessions were designed to achieve each of these goals, to accomplish the objectives of staff and participants.

How did participants evaluate the LTI and their experiences there? Were their expectations met? Overall, they indicated they were quite satisfied. Ninety-seven percent said the quality of the instructors was good or very good. Eighty-nine percent of the participants found the sessions good to excellent (negative comments were usually concerned with environment or scheduling). Ninety-five percent rated the published materials available at the sessions good to very good.

Ninety-three percent of the participants said the training satisfied their expectations. Only five persons, or 7% said the LTI did not fully meet their needs. No one rated the LTI as poor.

In terms of writing the State Plan, participants seemed to feel their expectations were adequately met. Most rated the quality of this area as good to very good. Topics most important in the sessions dealing with State Plans were:

Ideas for teacher training
Increased knowledge of program planning alternatives
criteria for selecting teachers for the gifted.

Final tallies of opinions concerning the development of the State Plan are indicated in the charts:

TABLE 2

LTI PARTICIPANTS' FEELINGS ABOUT BEING COMFORTABLE WITH THEIR STATE POSITION PAPER

Response	*Percentage*	*No of participants*
yes	80%	56 participants
no	9%	6 participants
no response	11%	8 participants

TABLE 3

LTI PARTICIPANTS' FEELING ABOUT WHETHER THE STATE PLAN THEY EVOLVED WAS WORKABLE

Response	*Percentage*	*No. of participants*
yes	87%	61 participants
no	1%	1 participant
no response	12%	8 participants

Participants also rated resources available at the Institute. The majority of the group rated items as good to very good. Over half of the participants felt that three areas were especially well covered and these were given a predominance of high ratings, notably:

1. Interaction with leaders in research and programming for the gifted (5[illegible]%)
2. Increased knowledge of what is happening in education of the gifted and talented (56%), and
3. Increased awareness of information sources on the gifted and talented (53%).

The LTI had definite influence on opinions concerning the education of the gifted. Comments of last year's participants were: sixty-three percent admitted that they became motivated to develop opportunities for the gifted through their participation in the Institute; 37% had prior intentions to develop programs. Ninety percent felt that their insight into the needs and aims of the gifted had been improved.

Much of the Institute stressed the techniques necessary to approach state or local people on the need for education for the gifted and talented. Eighty-three percent of the participants felt they gained insight into the politics of decision-making and thought that what they learned was very useful.

Participants were asked what general factors that they had gained from the Summer Institute were important to them. Over half of the people (63%) felt that meeting other participants and consultants at the Institute was very important to them. The Institute brought together the top experts in the field of gifted education, plus engaging people highly interested and motivated in the gifted sector of society. Other factors mentioned, dealt with the structure of the LTI, the environment, and the individual sessions.

OUTCOMES OF THE FIRST LTI

The LTI Director and staff had outlined broad program objectives for the first year, as stated in the earlier discussion of the origin of the LTI. The objectives covered the Summer LTI and its expected impact. A closer look reveals the results to date.

1. To extend mechanisms and networks established for regular and continued communications involving the US Office of Education, Regional Offices, states, local education and the LTI. Memoranda were sent quarterly to USOE Regional Offices and state education agency gifted and talented program officers to keep them up-to-date on LTI activities as they progressed. Also, the Regional USOE offices and State education agencies aided the LTI Director in updating and revising a national resource pool list of qualified individuals concerned about gifted and talented children. The task was completed on April 1, 1973. One qualified individual per region who was not part of the traditional "in group" on gifted child education was to be nominated and included as part of this resource list. Again, this objective was met and each person acted positively toward helping the LTI Director organize the first Summer Institute.
2. To develop and implement a plan to provide consultant services as required for effective LTI operations. There were two sub-objectives outlined under this main objective: (a) to assist at least two regions to mobilize Regional Action Teams and (b) to assist at least 10 states with acquiring technical assistance from nearby qualified consultants.

The first of these sub-objectives was effectively accomplished as the two representative regional teams had been mobilized last year. Each held planning meetings during 1973 and each

mobilized to start implementation of a regional LTI. The states developed an expanded awareness of nearby consultants during the first year of the LTI operation, which fulfilled subobjective two. The associate directors were assigned to specific areas of the country and were provided with consultant services according to individual state needs.

3. To train selected individuals both nationally and regionally at regular training institutes or workshops. This objective was effectively accomplished by holding the first National Summer LTI during July 8-20, 1973, in Squaw Valley, California. Seventeen states, one regional team and a representative nation (Canada) participated: a total of 79 people.
4. To develop, reproduce, and disseminate some appropriate documents and publications on gifted and talented through LTI-sponsored workshops and institutes. The first National Summer LTI provided the following documents for its participants.

   In cooperation with the National Clearinghouse for the Gifted and Talented

   The Identification of the Gifted and Talented
   Gifted and Talented Children and Youth: A Selected Guide to Resources for Information, Materials and Assistance
   Providing Programs for the Gifted and Talented: A Handbook
   Effecting Change

   Through the Ventura County, California, Schools

   Developing a State Plan for the Education of Gifted and Talented Students
   Strengthening State and Federal Relationships in the Education of the Gifted and Talented.

The program objectives outlined the development of approximately five publications to be disseminated through workshops and/or institutes. They were to contain vital information on the education of gifted and talented children.
The documents handed out at the first Institute met these objectives. The majority of the LTI participants felt that they were effective.

5. To increase public consciousness, awareness and knowledge about the gifted and talented. Documents and publications with this goal in mind were developed.

The following objectives were to be accomplished by the LTI participants during the two-week Institute:

1. *To formulate a written State Plan or to reassess the existing State Plan.* The LTI participants' main task during the Institute was to develop a state plan or to reassess the existing State Plan in terms of needs assessment, objectives, program options, budget considerations and possible legislative models. They were to become acquainted with these considerations through the training sessions, through the assistance provided by the consultants, and through published materials. This was effectively accomplished, since all state teams developed a State Plan at the Institute.

2. *To become familiar with kinds of available resources.* The LTI participants were given an introduction to available resources on the gifted and talented through the presence of "the experts" in the field of the gifted (consultants) at the Institute, through the developed materials and through the resource library, which provided a source of additional information on media products and published materials.
   As stated earlier, participants indicated that the group became adequately aware of materials and resources that were currently available.
3. *To design specific strategies for follow-up to the National Summer LTI.* The strategies for follow-up to the National Summer LTI by the participants were to concentrate on the areas of content, time structure and dissemination. Plans for this were to be included as part of their State Plan.

As mentioned earlier, the LTI core staff was to provide participants with increased competencies in various areas which are related to the education of the gifted and talented. In the course of the Institute, sessions were offered with this goal. Again, a closer look gives insight into their effectiveness.

1. *State of the Art.* The state of the art of the education of the gifted and talented was presented to the participants at the beginning of the training sessions. Comments from those attending indicate it was a very meaningful and realistic presentation.
2. *Characteristics of the Gifted and Talented.* Two items were to be covered during the Institute in relation to the characteristics of gifted and talented children, notably, identification procedures and resultant differentiated educational needs. Participants said both these points were adequately covered. The session dealing with alternatives in identification was also positively rated.
3. *Three Current Program Practices were discussed:*
   a. Program prototypes
   b. Program initiation steps
   c. Curriculum needs

   Several sessions were presented covering these areas:

   a. "Administering Gifted/Talented Programs"
   b. "Developing Curricula for Gifted/Talented Programs"
   c. "Legislation for the Gifted"
   d. "Federal/State Relation in Initiating and Maintaining Gifted/Talented Programs"
   e. "Evaluating Gifted/Talented Programs at the District and State Level"

   The participants gave favorable ratings to each of these presentations, ranking them either *very good* or *good.*

4. *Teacher Training (Pre-Service) and Teacher Selection.* A session entitled "Training Professionals to Work with the Gifted" was presented to the participants. Thirty-three people evaluated the session, giving it either a *very good* or *good* rating in all aspects of its presentation.
5. *Changing Process in Institutions.* The majority of the group members who responded to evaluation questions for this session rated it *very good* to *good.*
6. *Building an Advocacy Base.* To help accomplish this, there was a training session given to the participants entitled "Building an Advocacy Base for the Gifted and Talented in the State."

The apparent key to a well-received session is its practical application. Most satisfaction appears to have been associated with practical information that could be used immediately to start planning activities at the state level.

CONCLUSION

The data presented in the evaluation clearly reflect the development of a successful, productive and utility-oriented Institute that brought together seemingly dedicated people concerned about gifted and talented children. The participants had the enthusiasm the educational field needs to open a new area of primary concern.

The group feeling generated among the people resulted in a high order of interaction which included the LTI core staff. While recommendations were made for improvement in upcoming LTIs, the first Institute was well received.

The LTI was apparently a meaningful experience for most participants. Exchange of ideas and interaction of people begun at the Institute may well serve to foster national and state action in areas of education for the gifted and talented.

TABLE 1

STATE TEAMS ATTENDING THE FIRST SUMMER LIT

STATES	*NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS*
Alabama	5
Alaska	4
American Samoa	2
Arizona	5
District of Columbia	5
Florida	4
Guam	2
Illinois	2
Maryland	6
Massachusetts	5
Minnesota	2
Nebraska	4
Nevada	5
New Jersey	4
Ohio	2
Oregon	3
Pennsylvania	4
South Carolina	5
South Dakota	5
Texas	3
Canada	2
Total	79